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AUTHOR Hogan, Robert; Dickstein, Ellen
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents: (1) a definition of values; (2) a measure of moral values which seems to have adequate conceptual and psychometric properties; and (3) evidence concerning the personological correlates of mature moral judgment. Values are defined as the standards used in moral evaluations and the criteria for choosing rules of conduct. Using a brief, semi-projective task, moral judgments were elicited from undergraduate fraternity members. These were scored for maturity of moral judgment. Persons whose moral judgments were rated as mature tended to be sensitive to injustice, well-socialized, empathic, autonomous, and they based their judgments on intuitive notions of "goodness." (Author)

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A DIMENSION OF MATURITY: MORAL JUDGEMENT

BY

ROBERT HOGAN

ELLEN DICKSTEIN

The Johns Hopkins University

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Robert Hogan

Ellen Dickstein

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The Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, Maryland

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Center for Social Organization of Schools has two primary objectives: to develop a scientific knowledge of how schools affect their students, and to use this knowledge to develop better school practices and organization.

The Center works through five programs to achieve its objectives. The Academic Games program has developed simulation games for use in the classroom, and is studying the processes through which games teach and evaluating the effects of games on student learning. The Social Accounts program is examining how a student's education affects his actual occupational attainment, and how education results in different vocational outcomes for blacks and whites. The Talents and Competencies program is studying the effects of educational experience on a wide range of human talents, competencies and personal dispositions, in order to formulate -- and research -- important educational goals other than traditional academic achievement. The School Organization program is currently concerned with the effects of student participation in social and educational decision making, the structure of competition and cooperation, formal reward systems, ability-grouping in schools, effects of school quality, and applications of expectation theory in the schools. The Careers and Curricula program bases its work upon a theory of career development. It has developed a self-administered vocational guidance device to promote vocational development and to foster satisfying curricular decisions for high school, college, and adult populations.

This report, prepared by the Talents and Competencies program, is an analysis of the capacity to make mature moral judgments. The definition of mature moral judgment developed here will be used in further program work on the concept, nature, measurement and correlates of psychosocial maturity.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents (1) a definition of values, (2) a measure of moral values which seems to have adequate conceptual and psychometric properties, and (3) evidence concerning the personological correlates of mature moral judgment. Values were defined as the standards used in moral evaluations and the criteria for choosing rules of conduct. Using a brief, semi-projective task, moral judgments were elicited which could be reliably (r=.88) scored for maturity of moral judgment. Persons whose moral judgments were rated as mature tended to be sensitive to injustice, well-socialized, empathic, autonomous, and based their judgments on intuitive notions of "goodness."

Introduction

The concept of values seems essential for the explanation of social behavior and for a theory of social action. Parsons et al (1951) observe that the description of conduct at even the most elementary level requires an account of the evaluative criteria by which an actor selects his course of action. These authors further suggest that values may provide a common conceptual focus for the social sciences and a link with the humanities. It is a concept which can integrate "many diverse specialized studies -- from the experimental psychology of perception to the analysis of political ideologies, from budget studies in economics to aesthetic theory and philosophy of language, from literature to race riots" (p. 389). Values are particularly crucial for understanding moral conduct, which is pragmatically the most important region within the general domain of value studies.

The theoretical importance of values in the analysis of moral behavior is much greater than the quality of research on the concept would indicate. This research seems to have been hindered by two problems -- conceptual confusion and the lack of valid and reliable assessment techniques. Concerning the first problem,even a cursory survey of how psychologists have used the term values leaves one with a feeling of dismay (cf.: Allport, 1961, p. 296; Berkowitz, 1964, p. 444; Flugel, 1945, p. 12; Lewin, 1951, p. 273; McClelland, 1951, p. 243; Murray, 1938, p. 106; Pittel & Mendelsohn, 1966, p. 22; Scheibe, 1970, p. 1). Mowrer (1967) was prompted to remark that the word values is "an essentially useless term, which has recently come

into vogue because it serves as a sort of lowest common denominator for all who recognize, however vaguely, the reality of some sort of axiological dimension in human existence, but who don't want to be pinned down to anything too specific....the term, unless extensively qualified, verges on meaninglessness, and certainly lacks power and precision" (p. vii). With regard to the measurement problem, Pittel and Mendelsohn (1966) conclude that, in general, existing measures of moral values are unsatisfactory either because (1) they fail to distinguish between such concepts as moral knowledge and moral attitudes, moral responses and responses that are merely socially desirable, abstract concepts and actual behavior, or (2) they fail to meet the standard psychometric criteria of reliability and/or validity.

Concerning the related topic of moral judgment, we now have considerable information about age-related changes in the form and content of these judgments (cf. Kohlberg, 1964). However, little empirical information is available concerning the kinds of persons who make mature or immature moral judgments.

This paper has three purposes: (1) to develop a defensible definition of moral values; (2) to introduce a measure of values with adequate conceptual and psychometric properties; and (3) to explore some of the personological correlates of "mature" moral judgments.

A Definition of Moral Values

One useful method for discovering the meaning of a term is to observe how the concept functions in a behavioral context. Adopting

this pragmatic approach, Kluckhohn (1951) concluded that "Values implies a code or a standard...which organizes a system of action." That is, "actors perhaps most often think about or refer to values when they are in doubt about alternative courses of conduct: when the long-run results of the possible selections of paths of behavior are not immediately obvious or scientifically demonstrable or when pressures of personal motivation are strong on one side and social sanctions or practical expediency of some other kind are strong on the other side" (p. 395). As Kluckhohn suggests, values, although typically outside the periphery of awareness, are critical in the organization of behavior.

While values may be assumed to underlie all purposeful action, they are rarely formulated in an explicit, self-conscious fashion. Consequently values normally must be observed indirectly; and they may be perhaps most readily inferred from attitude statements. P. H. Nowell-Smith (1954) sharpens the distinction between values and attitudes. Values, he notes, precede and give rise to attitudes, the function of which is to express one's verdicts or appraisals of something or somebody. Moreover, "appraisals are judgments, not just expressions of a man's own taste or preference....When we judge something to be good, we always judge it to be good in respect of some property, and it is a question of empirical fact whether it has this property or not" (p. 164). According to Nowell-Smith, values are the "criteria" which are assumed or implied when one makes a judgment.

Moral values, then, may perhaps be best defined in terms of their closely related functions. Moral values are: (a) the standards used

in making moral evaluations; and (b) the criteria used in assigning priorities to rules of conduct. These values are not expressed directly in evaluations, nor can they be defined in terms of the moral rules. Rather, they are implicit in the process of judgment which precedes moral evaluations or conflict resolution, and they must be inferred from the ensuing behavior (in fact, values might not exist outside such a network of inferences). This definition raises three questions which, in the present context, can only be noted. First, where do values come from? Piaget has argued that they arise spontaneously from cognitive growth and peer group interaction; social learning theory, on the other hand, holds that values are learned by instruction and example. The second question concerns whether moral values can be considered in any sense objective, i.e., deriving from or reflecting empirical reality. Several writers have taken the position that certain values seem "objective" when considered in an evolutionary perspective (cf. Campbell, 1965; Waddington, 1960). The third question is, are all moral values equally moral?

With regard to this third question, there is agreement among some philosophers and psychologists that the most moral values or evaluative criteria are characterized by a general prescription to adopt the role of all others involved in the moral situation -- in Spinoza's words, to view the situation sub species eternae. A number of writers (e.g., Baier, 1958; Kohlberg, 1963; Peck and Havighurst, 1960) have suggested more specifically that the moral worth of a particular value may be estimated by the degree to which it reflects a broad moral perspective, the capacity to see both sides of an issue, a

concern for the sanctity of the individual, and a disposition to think in terms of the spirit rather than the specific content of moral rules. Consequently, values within individuals, and sets of values between individuals, may be (at least in principle) scaled along a continuum of increasing moral worth.

Kohlberg (1963) in particular has argued that moral values (and the attitudes to which they give rise) are, in most cases, subject to moral appraisal, that values may be called into moral account. Kohlberg's research on moral judgment, not surprisingly, is based on the premise that values may be evaluated. This work is generally (and properly) regarded as a major contribution to our understanding of the nature and development of moral values. However the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Scale (overlooked in Pittel and Mendelsohn's otherwise comprehensive review), which provides the methodological base for this research, is time-consuming to administer and difficult to score. A briefer and more readily scorable test which, nonetheless, elicits moral judgments ranging from the primitive to the morally sophisticated, would be a useful contribution to research in this area. Such a test is offered in the following section.

Introducing A Measurement of Values

Method

If moral values are the covert criteria on which moral judgments depend, then these values can be inferred from overt attitudes and moral judgments. Therefore, one approach to the measurement of values would be to elicit a series of moral judgments which could be rated in

accordance with the maturity of the values on which they seem to depend. A series of statements was constructed, each posing a concrete moral issue. Considerable care was taken to insure that the items: (1) were expressed in simple, matter-of-fact language; (2) contained an identifiable element of injustice; (3) presented more than one potential victim or oppressor who could be identified according to the choice of the subject; and (4) contained the maximum ambiguity consistent with clarity. The items were preceded by the following instructions:

"The following three pages contain 15 sentences. Read each statement and assume that it has been made by a person with whom you are having a conversation. Then, on the line below each statement, indicate what your reaction would most likely be."

The items themselves are presented below:

1. (Black speaker) "Even after graduating from high school I can't find work. Yet I know many white drop-outs who have good jobs."

2. "The FBI has its hands tied in many cases because of the unreasonable opposition of some people to wire tapping."

3. "The city is going to repeat what has been done in many other cities by building a super-highway right through the slum district. Many apartments will be torn down and the people will be forced out."

4. "Some boys have it so easy. They go to college and get out of the draft, and we get sent to Viet Nam."

5. "I told Jack my ideas for the new project. He took them to the boss and got the credit."

6. "The new housing law is unfair. Why should I be forced to take in tenants that I find undesirable?"

7. "In many medical laboratories experiments are performed on live animals and very little care is taken to minimize pain."

8. "I read another story today about a girl who was refused an abortion in a hospital. An incompetent doctor gave her an illegal abortion and she died."

9. "I think it is unnecessarily cruel to keep condemned prisoners on death row for so long, and to make the execution such an elaborate ritual."

10. "The police should be encouraged in their efforts to apprehend and prosecute homosexuals. Homosexualism threatens the foundations of our society."

11. "A powerful group representing hunters and gun manufacturers is holding up a gun control law that the majority of the people in this country want."

12. "The government shouldn't have passed the medicare bill. Why should we pay other people's doctor bills?"

13. "Several policemen were called into a slum area to break up a street fight but when they arrived the local residents threw bricks at them from the windows."

14. "During last year's ghetto riots a shopowner saw a boy jump out of the broken window of his store with a television set. The man shot the boy, who is now crippled as a result."

15. "The police were rough when they broke up that crowd of students, even though the students were parading without a permit."

The test was administered to 92 undergraduate students at The Johns Hopkins University; all were fraternity members tested at their respective fraternity houses. According to campus stereotypes, one group contained the campus radical-intellectuals, the second was middle-of-the-road, and the third fraternity was considered conservative.

Most Ss completed the test in 15 minutes or less. The range of answers and the amount of feeling expressed toward the items suggest that Ss became quite involved with the measure; their responses show the rich and varied content customarily associated with projective protocols. Phenotypically, answers seem to fall into one of four

categories. Taking item number 8 as an example, the first category may be described as punitive and includes such answers as:

1. "That's her tough luck."
2. "Arrest the doctor."

The second category of responses are answers which are either non-committal or seem to avoid the dilemma, such as:

1. "The girl should not have tried to solve her problems by going to such a man."
2. "That is too bad -- I wonder whether it was worth that much to her."

A third response type is best described as stereotypically or conventionally liberal. These responses, although seemingly problem-oriented, by their very popularity evidence little or no individual thought and consideration. Examples of this sort of response are:

1. "Legalize abortion."
2. "Law should be changed."

A final and surprisingly infrequent response category is characterized by answers which show an appreciation of the issues at stake and an involvement in the fate of the protagonist of the vignette. For example:

1. "I'm for legalized abortion in all cases where the mental or physical well-being of the mother or child is in doubt."
2. "Under certain circumstances she should have been granted an abortion. However, there should be criterion (sic) so that there is a negative incentive to get pregnant."

Results

Four raters scored the items on each protocol for "maturity of moral judgment" using the following scoring elements:

1. Concern for the sanctity of the individual.
2. Judgments based on the spirit rather than the letter of the law.
3. Concern for the welfare of society as a whole.
4. Capacity to see both sides of an issue.

Although certainly not exhaustive, these elements seem to encompass many of the features of what have been described as genuinely "moral" judgments. The scoring procedure itself was as follows. The response to an item was assigned two points if any one of the four scoring elements was clearly present in the answer. An answer was given 1 point if any one of the four scoring elements could be easily and readily inferred. A response was given 0 points if none of the scoring elements was present in the reply. Each of the 15 items could receive a maximum of two points, thus scores on this procedure could range from 0 to 30.

The following reply to item 4 is an example of a response assigned a score of two:

> "College education is an important natural resource, although the draft is, nonetheless, one-sided and unfair."

The following, in response to item 4 was given a score of one:

> "Education will hopefully lead to a country more able to avoid wars. But a more equitable system should be considered."

The following answer to item 4 received a score of 0:

"Every man for himself. If you had any sense you'd find a dodge. Get in another service, at least you won't be in the rice paddies. (Get in the National Guard, cut off a toe -- go to Canada.)"

Four raters scored the items on each protocol for "maturity of moral judgment" in accordance with the scoring elements and procedure outlined above. About five minutes were required to train the raters to use the scoring method. All raters scored all subjects for every item. An analysis of variance was then performed considering the data as a three-way factorial design without replications (cf. Guilford, 1954, p. 282; Stanley, 1961), where variations are over raters, items, and subjects. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance for Measure of Moral Values

Source	SS	df	Variance	F	P
Subjects (S)	356.37	91	3.92	21.78	.01
Raters (R)	69.61	3	23.20	128.89	.01
Items (I)	170.49	14	12.18	67.67	.01
(S x R)	120.96	273	0.44	2.44	.01
(S x I)	917.77	1274	0.72	4.00	.01
(R x I)	34.47	42	0.82	4.56	.01
Residual	694.43	3822	00.18		
Total	2364.10	5519			

Three important pieces of information are derived from Table 1. First, although the subject by rater interaction is significant, the interaction accounts for only about one percent of the total variance, suggesting that halo effects had minimal influence on the scoring of the protocols. Second, the interrater reliability, estimated from Table 1 by Hoyt's (1941) method, is .88, indicating that the raters were able to score the tests with good agreement. Third, the reliability of the test itself, estimated by the same procedure, was .82.

Validity

The total scores assigned to each person by the four raters were averaged to provide a final score for maturity of moral judgment. No single criterion would be appropriate to validate these scores because the network of theoretical and empirical relations in which the concept "maturity of moral judgment" is embedded is poorly understood. At the present stage in the concept's development it is perhaps more appropriate to seek "indicators" of validity (cf. Meehl, 1959) than validational criteria. One such indicator was developed in the following manner. Each S in the three fraternities mentioned above rated the other members of his fraternity for "sensitivity to injustice," defined as follows:

"A person who is sensitive to injustice will be quick to perceive unfairness in the decisions of persons or groups, or in the treatment that persons or groups receive from others. He may or may not openly express his concern; however, his feelings will be obvious to those

who know him. On the other hand, a person who is insensitive to injustice will be less likely to notice the unfairness in a situation, and will rarely show concern when such unfair treatment is pointed out to him."

All ratings were made along a 7-point scale. Some Ss remarked that they didn't know all their fraternity brothers equally well, so ratings from each fraternity were intercorrelated and the resulting matrix subjected to a principal components factor analysis. Those raters whose highest loadings appeared on the first unrotated factor were retained, the others were set aside. For the liberal fraternity, 19 of 35 raters were selected in this manner; for the middle-of-the-road and conservative fraternities, 23 of 29 and 11 of 28 raters respectively were retained. Each S was then assigned a score for sensitivity to injustice based on the average of the ratings he received from the selected raters of his fraternity. For the liberal fraternity the average intercorrelation among the selected raters was .35, and the reliability of the composite ratings for sensitivity to injustice, estimated by the Spearman-Brown formula, was .91. For the middle-of-the-road fraternity, the average selected interrater correlation was 138, and the reliability of the composite ratings for this group was .93. For the conservative fraternity these values were .36 and .86.

Table 2 presents correlations between scores for maturity of moral judgment (from the moral judgment scale) and ratings for sensitivity to injustice. These correlations suggest that persons who are regarded by their peers as sensitive to injustice tend to make moral judgments which are rated as morally mature. While only

Table 2

Correlations Between Maturity of Moral Judgment and Rated Sensitivity to Injustice for Three Fraternities

Fraternity	Correlations	
Liberal (N = 35)	.37*	.43
Middle of Road (N = 29)	.11	.13
Conservative (N = 28)	.44**	.52

Note.--Correlations in right hand column are corrected for attenuation. **: p<.01; *: p<.05, one tail test.

moderate in size, these correlations provide some initial validational evidence for our measure of moral values.

Personological Correlates of Mature Moral Values

Thus far the discussion has concerned estimates of the reliability and validity of a measure of moral values. We consider next the personological correlates, or character structure, of persons whose moral values seem mature. The first author has suggested elsewhere (Hogan, 1967) that moral development can be usefully conceptualized in terms of five dimensions, briefly labelled as moral knowledge, socialization, empathy, autonomy, and a dimension of moral reasoning defined by moral intuitionism at one end and moral rationalism at the other. These five dimensions may be assessed in a relatively straightforward fashion. A good estimate of the first dimension, moral knowledge, can be derived from IQ

test scores (cf. Maller, 1944). Socialization, the degree to which one has internalized the rules, values, and prescriptions of his society, can be estimated by scores on the Socialization scale of the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1957). Empathy, the capacity to consider the implications of one's actions for the welfare of others, can be assessed with a CPI-based empathy scale (Hogan, 1969). Barron's scale for Independence of Judgment (Barron, 1953) serves as a measure of autonomy, the degree to which one's actions are independent of the effects of authority, peer group pressure, and prestige factors. Finally, the dimension of moral intuitionism-moral rationalism is reflected in the Survey of Ethical Attitudes (Hogan, 1970). An adequate description of the character structure of any single individual requires information concerning the person's standing with regard to at least these five dimensions. Thus the relationship between scores on these dimensions and scores for maturity of moral judgment should offer some insight concerning the kinds of people whose moral judgments are characterized as mature or immature.

Forty-one students in an undergraduate psychology course at The Johns Hopkins University completed the measure of moral values, which was then scored by the same raters in accordance with the same scoring system as described above. These Ss were also administered the scales for socialization, empathy, autonomy, and moral intuitionism-moral rationalism. Correlations were then computed to estimate the relationships among these scales; the results of this analysis appear in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations between Maturity of Moral Judgment and the Variables Listed
(N = 41)

Scales	Correlations	
Socialization	.32*	.40
Empathy	.48**	.58
Autonomy	.36**	.56
Moral Intuitionism-Moral Rationalism	-.34[1]	-.40

Note.--1: $p<.05$, two tail test; *: $p<.05$; **: $p<.01$, one tail test. Correlations in right hand column corrected for attenuation.

Table 3 contains no information about the relationship between moral judgment and moral knowledge--the range of IQ for this sample was too narrow to yield a meaningful estimate. Kohlberg (1964) reports, however, that for a population of adolescent boys (N=72) the correlation between IQ and maturity of moral judgment (with age controlled) was .31.

The data appearing in Table 3 suggest that persons who make mature moral judgments tend to be well-socialized, empathic, and autonomous. Such persons also prefer an intuitive to a rational approach for the solution of moral problems. Persons whose moral judgments reflect an immature value system tend to be less socialized, non-emphatic, and conforming, and their moral reasoning

tends to have a rational as opposed to an intuitive basis. From a consideration of the dynamics of the measure of moral intuitionism--moral rationalism, the final correlation in Table 3 is puzzling. (The scale reflects two cognitive styles which are presumably neutral with regard to their ethical import. Higher scores indicate moral rationalism; lower scores indicate moral intuitionism--Hogan, 1970.) The other correlations are, however, in a theoretically expectable direction.

As a partial check on the results appearing in Table 3, 30 male undergraduates in an Introductory Psychology class at the University of Maryland were given the measure of moral values and the empathy scale. In this sample the correlation between mature moral judgment and empathy was found to be .58 ($p<.01$), .68 when corrected for attenuation.

Discussion

From a consideration of how the term values is used in ordinary language, it was suggested that moral values are the criteria or standards on which moral judgments are based. Values are rarely stated directly; rather they must be inferred from a person's moral judgments, typically expressed in terms of moral attitudes or decisions in moral choice situations. Certain philosophers and social scientists agree that the values held by an individual or a society are themselves subject to moral appraisal; the most moral values have the effect of requiring one to consider the viewpoint of all others involved in any given situation.

A measure of moral values was introduced whose item format and scoring procedure were closely tied to the preceding discussion. No claims were made for the unique properties of the item pool of this measure; however, the method itself seemed to be a useful technique for obtaining moral judgments in a standardized fashion. The remainder of the paper was concerned with discovering the network of "indicators" or empirical relations which implicitly defines mature (and immature) moral values. Five points emerged from the subsequent analyses. First, although the notion of mature moral judgment may seem somewhat ineffable, raters can, with good agreement, score the degree to which it is present in test protocols ($r = .88$). Second, persons whose moral judgments were considered mature tended to be regarded by their peers as sensitive to injustice ($r_{av} = .36$). Third, scores for mature moral judgment were significantly and positively related to socialization ($r = .40$), measured by a scale initially keyed against the criteria of delinquency vs. non-delinquency and subsequently shown to predict a variety of responsible, pro-social behaviors (cf. Gough, 1965). Fourth, mature moral judgment scores were also related to empathy ($r_{av} = .63$), measured with a scale originally developed against the criterion of rated empathy and subsequently shown both to predict other indices of interpersonal sensitivity and to moderate and qualify the effects of socialization (cf. Hogan and Henley, 1970; Hogan and Mankin, 1970; Hogan, et al, 1970). Finally, mature moral judgment was associated with high scores for autonomy ($r = .56$), measured by a set of items which

discriminated between yielders and non-yielders in the original Asch (1956) conformity studies, and have subsequently been found to relate to "various measures of inner resources and ego strength" (cf. Barron, 1965, p. 26). Thus persons whose moral judgments presuppose a set of mature moral values also seem to be responsible and well-socialized, perceptive and sensitive to the needs of others, yet self-directed and independent. An unexpected finding suggested that mature moral judgment is also associated with a disposition to base moral reasoning on personal and intuitive notions of "goodness" ($r = -.40$).

These findings prompt one final observation. It seems likely that mature moral values are a function of socialization, empathy, and autonomy (i.e. character structure) rather than the reverse. This suggests that a mature value system is, in some ways, "over-determined," and that the moral judgments of an undersocialized, non-empathic, and conforming person will tend to be immature. Although the developmental origins of socialization, empathy, and autonomy are not well understood, their antecedents probably depend on social and emotional factors as well as cognitive growth (cf. Stayton, et al, 1970). The fact that high scores for mature moral judgment are associated with high scores for socialization, empathy, and autonomy seems consonant with the Aristotelian notion, adopted more recently by Fromm (1947) and Peck and Havighurst (1960), that there is an important relationship between the development of moral character and the development of personality.

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